Akha A04
Miao AE5

/129 cont./

M 325 [531] [301] [177] A [301] [531] The silver ornaments of the Meau (chapter on "Clothing and /130/ Ornaments," Fig. 211 to Fig. 227), as well as those of the Akha (Fig. 239 to Fig. 253 of the same chapter), are sometimes decorated with attractive incised designs. The chasing technique by means of which spiral designs /Fig. 15 appears here/ are produced on the silver scabbards for daggers (Fig. 15) and the embossing technique occasionally used on bracelets may have been borrowed from the Thai peoples, but the fact remains that the Meau silversmiths are quite able to compete with the Thai ornaments in beauty of workmanship, even though the Meau men practice these difficult techniques just as casually as even the most famous women produce their batik designs.

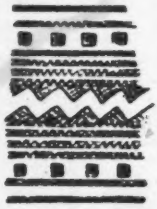

Fig. 14. Incised decoration on girl's pipe of the Akha. 2/1 nat. size.

A [531] [276] For test purposes, as has been mentioned, I had drawings made by both sexes. In the chapter, "Life in the Community," section on "Art in the Life of the Children," I have described the guiding principles that I followed in this. These drawings provided an interesting insight into the drawing talents of the Akha as well as of the Meau.

A M 532 In all the drawings, with the possible exception of Fig. 18, the complete lack of composition is striking. Only individual objects, animals, plants, or little scenes from daily /131/ life are ever represented. As a result many drawings are upside down or sideways. Usually one cannot determine by himself where the artist actually imagined the top or the bottom of the sheet to be. Actually, they focused their attention exclusively on that part of the drawing on which they were working at the moment. As soon as this was finished, the sheet was turned so that an adjacent free area of the sheet could be comfortably worked on, regardless of the position of the last drawing.

Akha as well as Meau men showed a special preference for representations of animals of the hunt and domestic animals; in addition, implements, weapons, and occasionally scenes

Mtao AE5
AKha A04

M /280 cont./
231 lattice of wooden beams. On the front side some of these beams
343 can be pushed aside in order to let the cattle in or out. Similar
417 hurdles are customary among our mountain peasants.
Lajonquière (1) describes the quarters of the domestic animals in

1. II, p. 305.

almost the same way, and furthermore Abadie (2) and

2. Page 158.

Fig. 83. Pigpen of the Meau. 1/60 natural size.

Fig. 84. Trough for pig fodder. 1/36 nat. size.

Savina (3), too.

3. II, p. 186.

A
M
348

4. Smithies

The smithy (Figs. 85 and 86) is a small structure built in the fashion of the dwelling, which consists of a workroom open at the sides and a second room enclosed with leaf-walls (E). The workroom is enclosed by only a few wooden beams (D) and, appropriately for the steep terrain, is on a platform. In it

M
[325]

Miao AE5
AKha A04

M 348 325 A 348

/280 cont./ stands a large table made out of mud, with a fireplace (A), bellows, fire tongs, and the other forge-implements, /281/ such as are described and illustrated in the chapter, "Handicrafts." In front of the mud table there stands a larger (B) and a smaller (C) anvil. /Figs. 85-86. appear here./

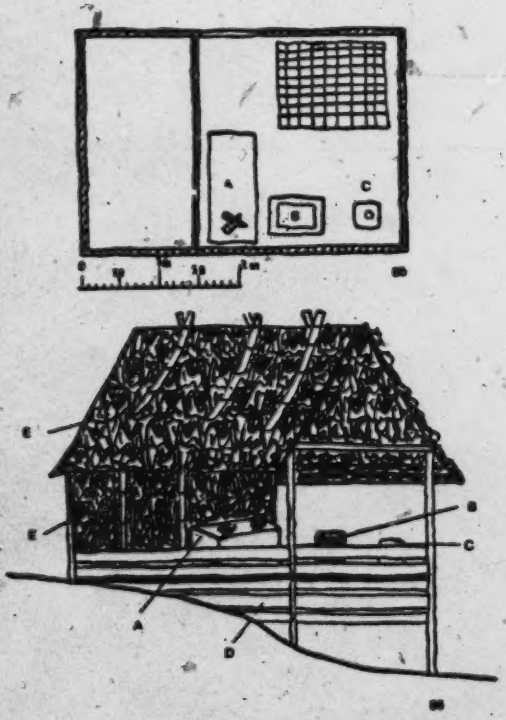

Fig. 85 (above). Smithy of the Meau, ground plan. A = worktable of pounded clay. B and C = anvils.

Fig. 86 (below). Smithy of the Meau, sketch. A = worktable with fireplace and bellows, B and C = anvils, D = wooden beam, E = palm-leaf shingles as roof covering and side walls.

/325 cont./

301 are worn over one another (Ills. 52-54).[1] The most common are simple round hoops which are worn open at the neck or are provided with a fastener of silver rings (Fig. 213). Instead of the small silver rings, a silver clasp may also be used to close the hoop, as, for example, in the case of the large neck ring of the shaman, which is illustrated in Fig. 212. Some- [789] times small charms, powder sewed into black cloth and the like, are attached to the neck hoop for protection against evil [531] spirits (Fig. 211). The two bent ends of the neck hoop are usually provided with incised designs (Figs. 214-216). In [412]

209 210

Figs. 209-210. Combs of the Meau.

Fig. 209. Wooden comb to stick in the hair, about 1/2 nat. size. Fig. 210. Bamboo comb for dressing the hair, about 1/3 nat. size.

addition to these typical solid silver hoops, such neck rings made of iron or copper, or of silver twisted with copper, are also worn (Fig. 217). All of the neck hoops are made by the Meau themselves and are also worn on workdays.

● [325] [177] The material for the making of silver ornaments is obtained by melting down the old Indochinese piaster pieces or Chinese silver coins. For a heavy men's hoop nine pieces of mon (which are old Indochinese silver coins) are required.

The earrings of the girls and women -- I did not see any on men -- are likewise made of solid silver. The most common form is provided with an arrow wound with fine silver wire (Fig. 218 and Ill. 60).[2] /326/ I have also often come across the large silver ear-pendants in the shape of reversed question marks, which Lajonquière (1) mentions, among the

1. II, p. 309.

[1] [see cat 116, pp 365-366 - ANALYST]
[2] [" " " p 448- "]

/406 cont./

322 824 Aside from the construction of houses and stables, wood has /407/ an extraordinary number of uses. For example, tables, benches, stools (Ill. 107) and beds, the distillation apparatus for making alcohol, rice mills, rice steamers and pounders, the troughs for the pig fodder, and the pack saddles for the animals (Ill. 81) are made of it; furthermore the handles of tools and knives, sheaths for knives, spear shafts and the gun stocks, crossbows, bellows (Ill. 82), and musical instruments, such as the mouth organ, are produced from it; the altars (Ill. 99) are built out of it; it is likewise necessary for building wells, [386] and, finally, dyestuff is also obtained from wood.

324 [412] [174] Since the Meau have long since left the Neolithic, stone tools are no longer in use, and since the immigration of the Meau into their present habitation area in northern Thailand took place only a few decades ago, I could no longer find any such material from their early history. On the other hand, even today the Meau work stone into grindstones (Ill. 94) or whetstones. Moreover, from a soft porous stone which they burn out before working, they make the crucibles (Fig. 365) 325 and casting molds (Ill. 82) for silver and copper, since they have a considerable knowledge of the use and working of metals. On the other hand, they are not in a position to obtain metals from ore, nor can they smelt wrought iron, but with the help of their bellows (Figs. 362-364) and a charcoal fire they know how to forge and weld it. They can smelt cast iron which they obtain from broken pots and pans acquired from the [439] Chinese traders. From this kind of iron, bullets and even implements, such as the shoe of the digging stick (Fig. 267) are molded. For this a mud mold is made of an implement for which one wants to make a new piece, and it now serves for the new casting. Casting by dead mold is unknown to the Meau in Thailand.

The forging equipment (Ill. 82) is of wood, iron, or stone and is entirely made by a Meau smith. It is:

1 [See cat 116, p706 - ANALYST]
2+3 [" " " p596 - "]
4 [" " " p664 - "]
5 [" " " p644 - "]

Miao AE5

/407 cont./

325 The bellows (Fig. 362), which consists of a wooden cylinder (a) made of boards joined together and sealed with wax, to which an air pipe (b) is attached. Fitted into the hollow space of the cylinder is a piston (Fig. 363, c) consisting [237] of two wooden disks, between which chicken feathers are pasted as packing. By means of an iron rod with a handle (d) the piston is /408/ pushed back and forth in the cylinder. When the iron rod is pulled out, the opening (e) of the cylinder, which has a small bamboo disk fastened to one end, is closed off on the inside through air pressure. Thus, no air can escape from the cylinder, but with the return thrust goes toward the fire in the air pipe terminating in a clay part (Fig. 364). Since the air pipe is not put at the end, but in the middle of the cylinder, stronger compression is sacrificed, to be sure, but the air supply is not thereby interrupted, since it continues with both thrusts of the piston. /Figs. 362-372 appear here./

The anvils (Figs. 366 and 367), of which there are usually several in various shapes and sizes in a smithy. The supporting pegs are of wood, the upper part of iron.

[285] The annealing basket (Fig. 368) is a piece of cylindrical basketwork that terminates in a funnel-shaped opening at the top. It is filled with wet clay and serves for cooling off the hot metal.

[415] As a casting mold one uses a small calabash, into which four small wooden sticks /409/ are put in the fashion shown in the drawing, Fig. 369. A cloth moistened with cold water is put over the sticks (Fig. 370). The liquid metal is poured from the crucible into the middle between the wooden sticks. When cold, it has the desired bar shape.

[413] The sledge hammer (Fig. 371), in various sizes, is flat on one side and has a chisel-like edge on the other. The wooden handles are simple and straight, though of various lengths.

[413] The blacksmith's tongs (Fig. 373) come in various sizes; they are made in two parts.

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/409 cont./

325 [439] Iron is bought from Chinese traders, or from the Lao, Schan /Shan/, or Burmese, in the form customarily traded in northern Thailand, four-cornered, square bars four to five centimeters thick and 50 centimeters long. Silver, brass, copper, and lead also come from them. In order to obtain [177] silver, the Meau melt Chinese, Burmese, or Indochinese silver coins in the crucible (Fig. 365) of porous stone and pour the silver into the mold (Figs. 369 and 370) which was previously lined with cloth so that the molten metal will not stick to the walls. The silver coins are crushed before they are

Figs. 362-372. Forging Equipment of the Meau.

Fig. 362. Bellows, 1/30 nat. size. Fig. 363. Piston of the bellows. Fig. 364. End of the pipe. Fig. 365. Smelting pot of stone, 1/6 nat. size. Figs. 366-367. Anvils, 1/35 [295] nat. size. Fig. 368. Annealing basket, 1/25 nat. size. [415] Fig. 369. Casting mold, 1/7 nat. size. Fig. 370. Casting mold in use. Fig. 371. Sledge hammer, 1/6 nat. size. [413] Fig. 372. Blacksmith's tongs, 1/6 nat. size.

/409 cont./

325 [237] put into the mold. The crucible remains open, and a piece of stag's horn is placed over the opening; it burns and, according to the Meau, is supposed to make the molten metal white and homogeneous. The crucible thus filled is now solidly encased in charcoal, and the bellows are set in motion. Soon the metal begins to melt. Some tobacco is sprinkled over the molten silver in order to prevent oxidation. The film of tobacco and ashes which forms on the silver is blown away with a small tube, and the molten, pure silver is poured into a bar-shaped mold. Before further use the silver bar thus produced is heated slightly and then shaped with a hammer. The [824] finished products are ground with stones and finally boiled and polished with the juice of lemons or other wild, acid plants. [413] In certain instances, ornaments are cut out, and, to be sure, [171] for this the chisel is used, whereas files are unknown. Strangely enough, the Meau in Thailand in contrast to the other mountain peoples of Farther India, are not familiar with any chased work.

/410/ Copper and brass, usually from broken vessels that [177] [439] came from China, undergo a process similar to that used for silver. Both metals are procured directly or indirectly from China, as is lead, which is traded in slabs five centimeters thick and ten centimeters wide.

The iron purchased as bar-iron is used for the manufacture of weapons, knives, tools, and the springs for the gunlocks. For this purpose, the iron is hardened by hammers. Wire- [414] drawing is unknown, and the Meau do not produce any nails [531] or screws. Buttons, ornaments, and decorations on knives and [301] guns are made out of silver, the magic rings (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," the section, 'Magic, Soothsaying, Interpretation of Omens") out of copper, and finally the metal parts of mouth organs out of brass, whereas lead is used exclusively for the manufacture of bullets. The Meau do not make metal alloys from the metals used by them, and even [323] clay forms for casting are unknown, since pottery is unknown.

/424 cont./

437 There are no articles that can only be bought with money
439 or with a specific barter commodity. If a person does not have any /425/ silver, he is free to give opium, game, or field produce in payment instead, just as he may buy silver, that is, coins, by means of such articles (see the chapter, "Law and the Administration of Justice," the section, "Property Law").

439 The Meau do not hold any markets of their own in northern
[143] Thailand and do not visit, in contrast to the Meau settled in
[184] Indochina, the markets of the Lao and Schan /Shan/ living in the valleys. Occasionally, to be sure, Lao traders appear among the Meau with their principal article of trade, salt, but usually the Meau undertake the journey in order to acquire the precious product from a Lao in the valley below or occasionally visit the Yau /Yao/ villages in order to buy silver ornaments, since the Yau enjoy a certain reputation as skilled silversmiths.

[184] As a result of closer contact with the Chinese and
439 Annamese, trade seems to be more highly developed among
114 the Meau in Indochina. Concerning this, Lajonquière (1) writes:

1. II, p. 311.

"They produce almost everything that is needed for their subsistence, but without getting any other advantage from it." Abadie (2), too, confirms this statement. Lajonquière con-

2. Page 161.

[273] tinues: "Nevertheless, a few distill alcohol from maize and
[325] sago for the valley dwellers. Others produce spades and plow-
[326] shares from the raw iron that they buy in the markets, and
[323] finally others make pottery. The manufacture of guns, which was formerly current among them, is gradually disappearing through the ease of importation."

39: Bernatzik--596 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947
AO1 Thailand
Miao AE5

/Between pp. 442 and 443/

231
291
492

Ill. 81. Saddling a pack ox among the Meau.

325
516

Ill. 82. Meau smith in his workshop.

/480 cont./
cultural elements drawn upon for proof are too few in number
174 and moreover in large part not characteristic for the Meau, and
[114] are often to be regarded as environmentally conditioned.

It is an interesting question whether the Meau may be classed in the circle of those peoples whose very ancient cultures are brought into relief from their surroundings by, among other things, megaliths, certain forms of animal sacrifice, and head-hunting. It is well-known that this culture is still alive today among the Naga and wild Wa and their neighbors. Relics in many places in Farther India, Hindustan, Indonesia, and beyond into the South Seas and traces in northwestern Europe, North Africa, and the Near East show that its spread must have been far greater in former times. -- I myself was able to identify the so-called "Moi peoples" of Indochina as belonging to this group, as I shall report in detail in another place. Judging by the available facts, there can be no doubt that the Meau do not belong to this cultural complex, even if the /481/ classification of the Meau language with the Mon-Khmer languages (see the chapter, "Language"), which is absolutely erroneous in my opinion, should be proved correct.

•[325] For the question of the origin of the culture of the Meau, a bronze drum allegedly made by the Meau and cast by dead mold, which is in the possession of the ethnographic museum in Vienna and has not yet been described up to now,* is of special

* During the printing of the present work, a few statements about this drum by F. M. Schnitger appeared in the Archiv für Anthropologie, 1943, Vol. XXVIII, p. 141.

[534] significance. The shape of the drum is shown in Figures 423 and 424. The diameter of the striking surface is 70.5 centimeters. The drum is hollow, open at the bottom, and four bronze handles are attached to the side walls. It belongs to the group of bronze drums that Heger discussed in his work, Alte
[532] Metalltrommeln aus Südostasien /Old Metal Drums from Southeast Asia/. /Fig. 423 appears here./ /482/ The drum

/489 cont./

174 cannot have anything to do with the Meau.

532 Furthermore, we come to the question of whether mountain peoples with a relatively lower culture, like the Meau, are to be credited at all with the production of such works of art [325] as these drums represent. If one considers the perfect casting and above all the ornamentation and plastic representation so well executed technically, this appears most improbable, quite apart from the fact that I could find no indications of any kind among the Meau that the technique of casting by dead form had been familiar to them at any time in their history. I would far rather speak of this work of art as the flowering of a high culture. Under these circumstances, and especially in view of the boats depicted, Von Eickstedt's conjecture, expressed orally to me, that a Thai people may have been involved as the original producer, is not to be rejected. Also the fact that the original homeland of several Thai peoples is to be sought not far from the region in which the Meau drum, according to its previous owners, was originally used at least does not argue against it.

174 To be sure, it is possible that the Meau, who, as their history leads one to suspect, had formerly developed a high culture or at least the beginnings of one, were checked in their development by martial events and oppressions following them, and their culture was subjected to a shrinking process. That a cultural atrophy of considerable proportions actually must have taken place /490/ can be verified by the far more primitive material culture in comparison with the spiritual culture. Even though it has still never been proved that such drums were made by the Meau, it is indeed theoretically possible, their great absolute antiquity being established, that they come from the cultural golden age of the Meau. The frequent statements in the literature to the effect that the Meau did beat bronze drums on various cultic occasions (Heger (1), Nan-chao (2) seem also

1. Pages 235 ff.

2. Pages 187 ff.

/VII cont./

231 492 Ill. 81. Saddling a pack ox. The Meau breed small, reddish-brown, humped cattle which are good pack animals. Saddles of wood with thick straw or cotton underlayers are used.

/VIII/

Ills. 82-90. Handicrafts.

325 Ill. 82. A smith in his workshop. With the help of a bellows, which he is operating with his left hand, he is just about to melt silver in a stone crucible over a charcoal fire. In the right foreground, the mold is ready. It consists of a cotton-covered wooden frame in the shape of the silver bars desired, and floats in a gourd shell filled with water. Note the tools, all of which have been made by the smith himself.

[415]

322 412 Ill. 83. Drill for working wood. By inserting iron drills of different sizes, various holes are made. The work of the hands is aided by the feet.

289 Ill. 84. Making paper for sacral purposes. Bamboo shavings are boiled with wood ashes and then crushed with a wooden club. Larger pieces of wood are removed.

Ill. 85. After the addition of a neutralizing agent, the wood pulp, finally predominantly homogeneous, is poured on cotton cloth and dried in the sun. The finished sheets of paper are carefully removed with a bone knife.

386 531 Ill. 86. Batik work on hemp cloth. With a brass pen, which is lying under the wrist, the pattern is applied in wax. The cloth is then dipped several times in blue dye and dried in the sun. This is repeated until the desired indigo-blue color is achieved. Then the wax is boiled off. The places previously covered with wax now stand out clearly from the dark-blue background.

294 Ill. 87. Girl sewing a new pleated skirt. The Meau girls are excellent and industrious seamstresses. It is particularly difficult to work on the harsh hemp fabric.